

# **The New Orleans *Blueprint for Safety* Agency Highlights**

## **911 Communications**

- Communicate risk level to responding officers by assigning either Priority 1A or Priority 2 response level
- Keep caller on the line when necessary for safety considerations
- Check to see if there have been previous calls involving the same parties or address
- Reinforce to callers that 911 is always available, regardless of how many times she/he has called

## **NOPD Law Enforcement**

- Expand attention from singular incident to history of violence: the Four Risk Questions
  1. Do you think he/she will seriously injure or kill you or your children? What makes you think so? What makes you think not?
  2. How frequently and seriously does he/she intimidate, threaten or assault you? Is it changing? Getting worse? Getting better?
  3. Describe the time you were most frightened or injured by him/her.
  4. Have you been threatened for seeking help, particularly from law enforcement or the courts?
- Avoid unintentionally arresting victims by assessing for self-defense first in predominant aggressor determination
- Pro-arrest response with limited discretion to not arrest a victim of battering who commits a misdemeanor
- Provide Patrol Report Checklist with corresponding supervisor's review checklist to help ensure complete reports with attention to DV specific crimes, and history of risk and danger
- Provide every victim of domestic violence the Official Notice to Adult Victims of Family Violence Form to ensure victims receive information on resources including the Family Justice Center and 24 hour hotline

## **DA's Office Prosecution & DV Victim/Witness Advocates**

- Incorporate risk and danger into charging decisions, bail recommendations and negotiated plea agreements
- Respond to domestic violence crimes in ways that are victim safety-centered but not victim-dependent
- Request a pre-sentence investigation in all felony domestic violence cases

## **OPSO Jail Administration**

- Prohibit visits between victims and inmates subject to stay away or protective orders
- Protect domestic violence victims from intimidation and harassment by the suspect/defendant while in custody

## **Domestic Violence Monitoring Court & DOC Probation and Parole**

- Obtain information from victims that will enhance supervision of the offender
- Refer batterers to Batterer Intervention Programs, not anger management
- Adjust response for probationers who may also be victims of domestic violence
- Incorporate risk and danger into recommendations on conditions of release and violation sanctions

## **Municipal Court**

- Establish a courtroom atmosphere that enhances criminal justice system intervention to support attention to risk, context and severity, victim safety and offender accountability

# The *Blueprint* for Safety

## Foundational Principles

1. Adhere to an **interagency approach** and **collective intervention goals**  
*Agencies have to work together to be successful*
2. Build attention to **context and severity** of abuse into each intervention  
*We have to adjust what we do to the level of violence that's occurring*
3. Recognize that most domestic violence is a **patterned crime** requiring **continuing engagement** with victims and offenders  
*Most of these cases keep coming back; we need to treat them as part of a pattern*
4. Ensure **sure and swift consequences** for continued abuse  
*The system must respond to continuing or escalating aggression with swift and sure consequences*
5. Send **messages of help and accountability**  
*Every time we talk to him or her we send a message. Our message needs to be consistent.*
  - To her: *you can't handle this alone, we're here to help you.*
  - To him: *you can't blame others, you must stop this behavior, help is available if you want to change.*
  - To children: *we are here to help.*
6. Act in ways that **reduce unintended consequences and disparity of impact** on victims and offenders  
*We want to avoid doing more harm than good by what we do.*

## A Collective Policy & Response

- A single, overarching policy based on essential elements of effective response
- Supported by research and 30 years of community practice
- All agencies identify, document, communicate, and act on *risk and danger*
- Grounded in experiences of victims – practitioners engage with victims
- Inter- and intra-agency monitoring are built in
- A structure for ongoing problem solving among agencies

## Victim Engagement Guidelines

- Be aware that the fundamental purpose of battering, which characterizes the majority of domestic violence criminal cases, is to control what the victim says, thinks, feels, and does.
- Offer a clear alternative to messages from the batterer that the victim is crazy, at fault, unbelievable, and unable to make decisions and that the abuser is unstoppable.
- Minimize a victim's need to confront the offender.
- When using information provided by a victim, protect her/him from retaliation by not identifying the victim as the source of the information.
- Treat each interaction with a victim as an opportunity to build partnerships over multiple interventions.